



# State Historic Preservation Office

South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
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## Definition and Treatment of GAPCs and Significant Sites

### Geographic Areas of Particular Concern (GAPCs)

GAPCs receive special management consideration. As stated in the Policies and Procedures of the South Carolina Coastal Management Program, “when a site overlaps with, is adjacent to, or significantly affects a GAPC, [DHEC-OCRM] will carefully evaluate the project based on the criteria listed as the priority of uses which specifically address each type of GAPC.”

Sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places are GAPCs. For these GAPCs, the following priorities of uses are evaluated for archaeological and historic sites, beginning with the highest priority use:

- (1) Uses which preserve the historical or cultural values for which the site was placed on the National Register.
- (2) Educational opportunities for the public regarding the historical, archaeological or cultural significance of the site as long as the site is not disturbed.

### Significant Sites

Coastal policies related to significant sites, which are considered during project review, are located in [Chapter 3 of the Program Document](#) section titled “Guidelines for Evaluation of All Projects”:

*“in review and certification of permit applications in the coastal zone, the [DHEC-OCRM] will be guided by the following general considerations:...9) the extent and significance of impact on the following aspects of quality or quantity of these valuable coastal resources...iii) historic or archaeological resources—**irretrievable loss of sites** identified as **significant** by the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology or the S.C. Department of Archives and History without reasonable opportunity for **professional examination and/or excavation, or preservation.**”*

### Definitions

**Irretrievable loss:** An irretrievable loss of significant sites can include, but is not limited to:

- Physical destruction or damage to all or part of the property,
- Alteration of a property that destroys the archaeological or historic significance,
- Removal of a property from its historic location,
- Changes to the setting of a historic property, and
- Introduction of visual elements

**Significant:** The SHPO considers sites that meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places to be significant for the purpose of this program. Any cultural resources surveys or [Historical and Archaeological Properties Survey \(HAPS\)](#) (PDF) that identify archaeological or historic sites in the coastal area must provide the SHPO with enough information to make this determination of significance.

***Professional:*** Professional examination and/or excavation, or preservation must be conducted by individuals that meet the [Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards](#) in archeology, history, architectural history, or historic architecture, as appropriate. For projects located within a [Certified Local Government \(CLG\)](#) review authority, the CLG board of architectural review may be considered as professionals, as long as at least one board member meets the Professional Qualification Standards for the specific subtype necessary.

***Examination and/or Excavation:*** Is defined for different resource types below.

*Archeology:* A reasonable opportunity for the examination and/or excavation of a significant archeological site includes the data recovery of the site. Data recovery should be conducted with an acceptable research design approved by the SHPO that answers questions not yet asked, places the significance of the site within the appropriate historic context, and addresses what the public and professionals will learn after the site is excavated.

Data recovery plans require flexibility, and the SHPO encourages creative and up-to-date research methods. These methods may include representative sampling strategies, remote sensing techniques, and specialized analyses. Plans shall include a detailed description of all proposed field and laboratory methods as well as plans for documentation and curation of artifacts. Data recovery plans should also include arrangements for presenting what has been found and learned to the public, focusing particularly on the community or communities that may have interest in the results.

*Architecture/Above-Ground:* A reasonable opportunity for the examination and/or excavation of a significant above-ground site includes the appropriate documentation of the site. Documentation includes, at a minimum: archival-quality black-and-white photographs (interior and exterior), measured drawings, and a written history that places the significance of the site within the appropriate historic context.

*Alternative Examination:* Alternative examinations for significant archeology or above-ground sites may also be appropriate. Alternative examinations could include: site interpretation, the development of a historic context for a geographic area or type of site, brochure, website, exhibits, or oral history projects.

***Preservation:*** A reasonable opportunity for the preservation of a significant site involves the placement of a restrictive covenant on the site. DHEC-OCRM and the SHPO have developed guidance templates for these covenants and copies are available upon request from DHEC-OCRM. The SHPO also encourages property owners to consider the nomination of significant sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

*February 2020*